

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 OMB-01 EUR-25

AF-10 DRC-01 /123 W

----- 005790

O 061105Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1089

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

INFO COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 0122

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : COMIDEASTFOR PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN

REF : (A) JIDDA 1076; (B) KUWAIT 0848; (C) BAHRAIN 0038

1. IN ABSENCE OF PRIME MINISTER KHALIFA, I CONVEYED TO FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMAD AT 7 P.M. ON MARCH 5 SUBSTANCE OF JIDDA REFTEL, CONCENTRATING ON KING FAISAL'S VIEWS THAT MIDDLE EAST FORCE SHOULD REMAIN IN BAHRAIN AND OPTIONS CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 4 THAT GOB MIGHT CHOOSE FOR CORROBORATING WITH SAQQAF (BUT ONLY WITH HIM) THE ATTITUDE OF FAISAL. I HAD ASKED FOR AN URGENT APPOINTMENT NOT OUT OF AN INTENTION OF PRESSING THE GOB TOWARDS ANY OVERLY HASTY DECISION ON MIDEASTFOR, BUT RATHER BECAUSE (A) AMBASSADOR STOLTZFUS AND I BELIEVED THE GOB MIGHT WANT TO HAVE THE OPTION OF CHECKING WITH SAQQAF BEFORE HE DEPARTED FOR HE FAR EAST AND (B) WE WANTED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY TO CONVEY TO THE GOB THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO CONTINUING MIDEASTFOR ON BAHRAIN.

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2. MOHAMMAD APPEARED TO BE SURPRISED BY THE NEWS RE

FAISAL'S VIEWS ON MIDEASTFOR AND NOTED THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NEVER RESPONDED TO THE MIDEASTFOR TERMINATION NOTICE. THUS BAHRAIN HAD NOT REALLY KNOWN WHETHER THE AMERICAN NAVY WANTED TO STAY IN BAHRAIN OR NOT. HOW SHOULD BAHRAIN REACT TO FAISAL'S VIEWS ON MIDEASTFOR WHEN THE UNITED STATES OWN VIEWS HAD NOT BEEN MADE CLEAR? I LET THIS BIT OF DISINGENUOUSNESS PASS AND ASSURED MOHAMMAD THAT THE USG DID INDEED WANT TO RETAIN ITS NAVAL PRESENCE HERE. THUS WE HOPED THAT BAHRAIN COULD FIND SOME WAY TO EFFECTIVELY RESCIND THE TERMINATION NOTICSCM

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE HAD JUST COME FROM THE FIRST MEETING EVER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE, LEAVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE MIDEASTFOR HAD BEEN A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION. THERE WERE ADVANTAGES TO HAVING THE AMERICAN NAVY HERE BUT DIS-ADVANTAGES AS WELL FOR A SMALL COUNTRY LIJ 084-8.. MOHAMMAD SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SET ASIDE AS MUCH AS TWO HOURS TO DISCUSS ALL ASPECTS OF THE SUBJECT. WHEN I WELCOMED THIS OPPORTUNITY, AND APPOINTMENT, TO BE CONFIRMED LATER, WAS SET FOR MARCH 7.

4. IN CONCLUSION, I NOTED THAT THE PURPOSE OF MY CALL HAD BEEN TO CONVEY TO THE GOB THE WELCOME NEWS TO US THAT KING FAISAL FAVORED THE CONTINUATION OF MIDEASTFOR IN BAHRAIN. I EXPECTED THAT THE GOB WOULD TAKE THE SAME POSITIVE VIEW THAT WE DID OF THIS DEVELOPMENT. FINALLY, I WONDERED IF MOHAMMAD WOULD CONVEY WHAT I HAD SAID TO THE RULER OR IF HE FELT THAT I SHOULD DO SO MYSELF. FOREIGN MINISTER RESPONDED THAT THE AMERICAN DESIRE TO RETAIN MIDEASTFOR AND KING FAISAL'S VIEWS TOWARDS IT WOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN BAHRAIN'S DECISION. THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD RETURN FROM LONDON ON MARCH 10 AND WOULD OBVIOUSLY FIGURE IN BAHRAIN'S CONSIDERATION OF THE MATTER. MEANWHILE, MOHAMMAD BELIEVED I SHOULD ALSO CONVEY TO THE RULER WHAT I HAD ALREADY SAID TO HIM AND HE VOLUNTEERED TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT.

5. COMMENT: FOR THE FIRST TIME I BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE CONVENTIAL WISDOM IS CORRECT THAT THE FOREIGN CONFIDENTIAL

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MINISTER OPPOSESE A CONTINUATION OF MIDEASTFOR. HE LEFT ME WITH NO CLEAR IMPRESSION OF WHETHER I SHALL BE SEEING THE RULER, SHEIKH ISA BEFORE, OR ONLY AFTER THE P.M. RETURNS ON MARCH 10. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, I SHARE THE VIEW OF AMBASSADOR STOLTZFUS THAT WE WISH TO AVOID ANY IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE PRESSURING THE GOB FOR AN IMMEDIATE DECISION ON MIDEASTFOR. THE IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENT IS THAT WE HAVE KING FAISAL'S SUPPORT AND,

ASSUMING OUR IMPRESSIONS ARE CORRECT THAT BOTH THE RULER
AND THE PRIME MINISTER FAVOR RETAINING OUR NAVY, THERE
NOW APPEAR TO BE GOOD REASONS FOR EXPECTING A FAVORABLE
OUTCOME.
KILLGORE

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